

New Claims 17-19

New claim 17 which includes all of the limitations of claim 1, is submitted to patentably distinguish over the cited art for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

New claims 17 includes a patentable distinction beyond that of claim 1, namely: "a second mode of operation in which said rim is gripped by both the first and second sets of jaws."

It is submitted that such a feature is patentable over the cited art. For example, Dunn discloses that only one set of jaws engage (contact) a discs at any one time (e.g., that only the teeth from rack members A1-A3 or the teeth from rack members B1-B3 contact the discs 46 and 48 at any one time). The ability to grip the discs using both of said first and second sets of jaws may be advantageous because it may provide a more robust grip on the objects during handling operations.

New claim 18

New claim 18, which includes all of the limitations of claim 1, is submitted to patentably distinguish over the cited art for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Claim 18 includes a patentable distinction beyond that of claim 1 and similar to that of claim 17. It is submitted that claim 18 patentably distinguishes over the cited art for other reasons similar to those of claim 17.

New claim 19

New claim 19, which includes all of the limitations of claim 1, is submitted to patentably distinguish over the cited art for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

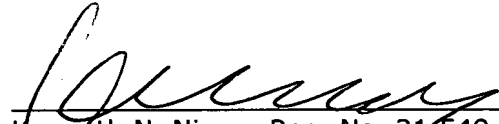
Claim 19 includes a patentable distinction beyond that of claim 1, namely: "said second set of jaws has a free end that is free to extend through the aperture of at least one of said objects when the apparatus first engages with said at least one of said objects."

Consideration and approval of claims 17-19 is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the claim amendments and new claims, Applicants submit the application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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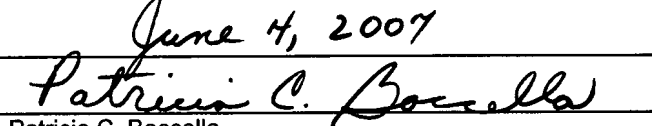
Attachments: Figures 1-4 (4 sheets)
Abstract (clean copy and marked up version)
Specification (clean copy and marked up version)

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Patricia C. Boccella